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ABSTRACT

The Leadership Excellence Achievement Plan (LEAP) presented here is a way for principals to improve leadership ability with an emphasis on evaluation. It first recommends formulating a precise definition of the principal's job divided into three areas: technical competencies, administrative skills, and performance goals. Among the technical competencies listed as typical are providing instructional leadership, visiting classes, and preparing the school budget. The twelve areas of administrative skills considered appropriate include problem analysis, judgment, organizational ability, and decisiveness. Performance goals to achieve specific outcomes are to be established by the principal. The next step suggested is for the principal and the principal's immediate supervisor to draw up a work plan--a "development plan" (if job performance is already satisfactory) or an "improvement plan" (if job performance is not satisfactory). The progress review is recommended to monitor how things are going midyear. For the final assessment it is suggested that the most defensible report form would combine rating scales and narrative assessments. The report includes examples of step-by-step procedures on a time-line and typical evaluation forms to show how LEAP might operate. (Author/JM)

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# EVALUATION OF PRINCIPALS

## Leadership Excellence Achievement Plan

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Leadership is an elusive trait and one not often evaluated. Leadership is usually evident in its results but rarely analyzed in those terms. In fact, it is easier to verify ineffective than effective performance.

The pursuit of excellence in educational leadership is a continuing endeavor. Absolute competence is probably a utopian ideal since the range of skills required of the principal is so broad. Yet it is possible to employ evaluation in ways that contribute to the quest for competence. Principals need an achievement plan which has evaluation as an important component. The *Leadership Excellence Achievement Plan* (LEAP) is grounded on appropriate evaluation.

### Components of LEAP

A precise definition of the principal's job is the starting point for our Leadership Excellence Achievement Plan (LEAP). Both the principal and the immediate supervisor must be in agreement about the expectations of the position. While job content may be described in different ways, we shall define it in terms of technical competencies, administrative skills, and performance goals.

JOB CONTENT
- TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES
- ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS
- PERFORMANCE GOALS

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Understanding job content is essential if evaluation is to be meaningful. The above three components establish a firm foundation for effective evaluation.



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- TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES. Position descriptions outline the required competencies. Most school systems rely upon these descriptions to indicate job expectancies. A wide range of samples may be found in the NASSP monograph Job Descriptions for Principals and Assistant Principals (1979). The following example (slightly modified) from the Green Bay (Wisconsin) Public Schools is typical:

POSITION TITLE: Secondary School Principal
(Senior High - Junior High)

BASIC FUNCTION: Administers the senior high school according to the philosophy, objectives, and policies of the board of education under the supervision of the director-secondary education. Provides educational leadership to both faculty and students and inspires them to contribute their best efforts.

POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Provides instructional leadership within the school and, where appropriate, emphasizes K-12 correlation of programs.
- Visits classes to observe, assist, and document the work of the teachers and follows all visitations with written reports to be given to teachers.
- Evaluates and makes recommendations on the performance of the assistant principal, teachers, co-curricular advisers, department chairmen, and also on classified personnel.
- Prepares the school budget request for submission to the director - secondary education.
- Recommends to the director - secondary education for approval all course offerings, textbook adoptions, and other instructional matters.
- Designs the master scheduling of classes with the approval of the director - secondary education.
- Directs all school business affairs.
- Approves all purchase orders and countersigns all pay orders from school activity fund accounts.
- Directs pupil accounting procedures.
- Assures articulation between the elementary schools and the secondary school instructional program to the best of their ability; also between the senior high and post-high school institutions.
- Directs an effective public relations program.
- Recommends the assignment or transfer of teachers, including all co-curricular advisers, to the director - secondary education.
- Maintains discipline in the school and at all school functions.
- Maintains effective communication with parents, teachers, and students.
- Directs the school's co-curricular activities.
- Coordinates school programs, events, or activities which have district implication through the director - secondary education.
- Interviews and makes final selection of prospective members of certified and classified staff, whenever possible.
- Directs instructional programs to meet the individual needs of the students and to assure accreditation.
- Serves on the Secondary Curriculum Council.
- Makes an annual report to the director - secondary education.
- Initiates programs, activities, and events -- original or innovative in nature. (Programs, activities, and events having district implications should be approved by the director - secondary education.)

- Schedules and conducts meetings of the faculty.
- Represents the school in league or conference meetings.
- Directs the utilization of facilities.
- Prepares the official calendar of school-sponsored events.
- Performs other duties as assigned by the director - secondary education or the superintendent of schools.

- ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS. The second job content component encompasses the 12 administrative skills identified by the NASSP Assessment Center project as essential to successful performance in the principalship. These 12 significant administrative skills have been adapted here to delineate the appropriate job content for principals. (For further information about the assessment center concept, see the NASSP Bulletin, September 1977 and October 1980.)

1.0 Problem Analysis

- 1.1 Seek out relevant data
- 1.2 Analyze complex information
- 1.3 Determine important elements of a problem situation

2.0 Judgment

- 2.1 Identify educational needs
- 2.2 Set priorities
- 2.3 Reach logical conclusions
- 2.4 Make high-quality decisions based on available information
- 2.5 Evaluate written communications critically

3.0 Organizational Ability

- 3.1 Plan, schedule, and control work of others
- 3.2 Use resources in an optimal fashion
- 3.3 Deal with a volume of paperwork and heavy demands on one's time

4.0 Decisiveness

- 4.1 Recognize when a decision is required
- 4.2 Act quickly (without an assessment of the quality of the decision)

5.0 Leadership

- 5.1 Recognize when a group requires direction
- 5.2 Get others involved in solving problems to interact effectively with a group
- 5.3 Guide a group to the accomplishment of a task

6.0 Sensitivity

- 6.1 Perceive needs, concerns, and personal problems of others
- 6.2 Be tactful in dealing with persons from different backgrounds
- 6.3 Resolve conflicts
- 6.4 Deal effectively with people concerned with emotional issues
- 6.5 Know what information to communicate and to whom

7.0 Range of Interests

7.1 Competence to discuss a variety of subjects (eductional, political, economic, etc.)
7.2 Desire to participate actively in events

8.0 Personal Motivation

8.1 Take personal satisfaction in work
8.2 Achieve in activities attempted
8.3 Be self-motivating

9.0 Educational Values

9.1 Possess a well-rounded education
9.2 Evidence of a philosophy of education
9.3 Receptiveness to change and new ideas

10.0 Stress Tolerance

10.1 Perform effectively under pressure and opposition
10.2 Think on one's feet

11.0 Oral Communication Skill

11.1 Make a clear oral presentation, using ideas and facts

12.0 Written Communication Skill

12.1 Express ideas clearly in writing
12.2 Write appropriately for different audiences (students, teachers, parents, other administrators)

- PERFORMANCE GOALS. The third aspect of job content deals with the performance goals that the principal establishes to achieve specific outcomes. A good performance goal states what is to be done, how it will be accomplished, and how and when it will be evaluated. Performance goals deal with workable behaviors that can be measured by the results.

The following goal is illustrative:

*Goal: I will involve staff and community in developing an annual plan related to appropriate instructional program improvements in my building.*

*To accomplish this, I will:*

- *Develop questionnaires to be distributed to all parents, students, and staff members prior to January 1 of this year to obtain their opinions about the curriculum areas needing improvement.*
- *Form a joint committee of parents, teachers, students, and administrators to tabulate the results of the questionnaire and prioritize the suggestions offered by each group prior to March 1.*
- *Formulate an annual school plan based on the established priorities.*

*Evidence of Accomplishment: I will know that the goal has been accomplished when:*

- *I produce the completed annual school plan for my supervisor's review and approval on or before April 30. Suggestions utilized in the plan from the joint committee will be identified to document committee influence.*

## Identifying Current Performance Level

Once job contents are established, the next step in LEAP is to identify the status of current performance. This is a two-way determination -- self-identification by the principal and suggestions from the principal's immediate supervisor (the evaluator). This approval process in turn leads to an analysis of the principal's needs and an action or work plan.

Most principals usually perform at a satisfactory (or better) level. When this is true, appraisal customarily involves either fine-tuning existing competencies and skills and/or undertaking goals for further professional growth and development. The work plan in this instance is a *DEVELOPMENT PLAN*.

In those instances where the principal is experiencing difficulties in performance, appraisal may take on a different significance. If the work plan is designed to correct deficiencies, it can be termed an *IMPROVEMENT PLAN*.

- DEVELOPMENT PLAN. The principal prepares the development plan for supervisor review. In formulating a development plan, the principal must:

  - ✓ Indicate the competencies, skills, and goals to be undertaken.
  - ✓ Concentrate on few areas and goals. (In-depth achievement has a much higher payoff than a superficial accomplishment of many items.)
  - ✓ Prepare a carefully drawn action plan outlining the implementing activities in terms of the desired outcomes.
  - ✓ Make sure that the immediate supervisor reviews the DEVELOPMENT PLAN, suggests revisions (if needed), and "signs off" to indicate approval.

- IMPROVEMENT PLAN. Certain deficiences may exist in the principal's current performance. These may involve technical competencies, administrative skills, or both. They may even touch on the accomplishment of performance goals.

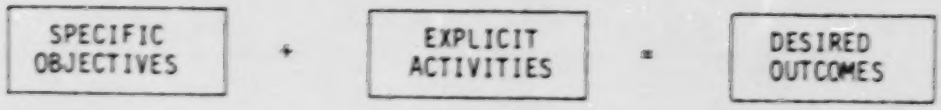
  When deficiencies are identified, the nature of the work plan shifts to specific corrective actions. The emphasis is upon improvement and the plan becomes an IMPROVEMENT PLAN.

  It is important that the principal and immediate supervisor mutually agree on (a) the nature of the deficiencies, (b) the corrective action(s) needed, and (c) the kind of action plan to be implemented.

An *IMPROVEMENT PLAN* is distinguished from a *DEVELOPMENT PLAN* by having greater specification:

- ✓ More explicit statement of needs and corrective actions
- ✓ Assignment of responsibility for carrying out the action plan. (The supervisor acknowledges responsibility to the principal by defining the number of conferences to be held during the evaluation cycle, the type of financial program assistance that can be expected, etc. The principal provides evidence of personal effort to be expended in carrying out the action plan, the additional help that will be needed, etc.).
- ✓ Clear indication of the kinds of results to be expected.

The final two letters of LEAP deal with desired outcomes. The key words are achievement and planning. Goals, whether in a DEVELOPMENT or IMPROVEMENT PLAN, determine the nature of the implementing activities. The more specific the goals and the more explicit the implementing activities, the more certain the attainment of desired results.




## Reviewing Progress

One of the basic differences in administrator and teacher evaluation is the matter of monitoring performance. Classroom observation is the primary monitoring tool for teachers. The Progress Review is the most effective method for administrators. The person being evaluated confers with the evaluator and gives a progress report on the attainment of the items in the work plan plus any supporting material that may be available:

The progress review usually includes:

- ✓ Indication of the extent to which goals and action plans are "on target."
- ✓ In general, how well things are going.
- ✓ Problems or difficulties being encountered (if any).
- ✓ Suggestions of any modifications in the work plan.
- ✓ Prognosis for successful end-of-the-year achievement of the work plan.

Progress reviews are commonly conducted in December and March with the final evaluation in June.

## Assessing Results

There are many ways to categorize results. Each approach has strengths and deficiencies. Some of the most widely used techniques include:

- Scaled Categories. This is a conventional approach. A three-to-five-point rating scale (numbers, letters, or descriptive terms) is ordinarily used. Numbers may be averaged to derive a composite score. But numbers alone can be misleading. The difference, for example, between an average of 3.7 and one of 3.9 is more apparent than substantive. Furthermore, unless numbers and letters are defined, the perceptions of different evaluators are likely to spread across a wide spectrum. If scaled categories are used, they should be broad and defined carefully. Note the examples among the forms on the subsequent pages.

- Narrative Assessment. If carefully constructed and written, narrative statements can be highly individualized and descriptive of results. Good narrative assessments, however, are not easy to develop. Evaluators frequently lack the ability to write accurate, coherent, and concise statements. It is easy to fall into the habit of using stereotyped phrases and clauses, changing a few words as perceived appropriate. If narrative assessments are used, evaluators will benefit from writing skill-development sessions.

(Perhaps the most defensible final evaluation report form combines rating scales and narrative assessments.)

- Appraisal Conference. The conference between parties to discuss the implications of the formal assessment is an important step in the total evaluation process. A well-conducted conference will reinforce and enhance the outcomes of successful performance; a poorly conducted conference will only diminish them. It is essential, therefore, that evaluators develop effective conference techniques. These conferencing skills can be enhanced by reading and inservice activities.

## To Illustrate

LEAP in Action. The following step-by-step procedures illustrate how LEAP might operate.

| | |
|---|---|
| STEP 1<br><br>Determine Needs<br>(August and September) | (1) The principal reviews:<br>(a) Position description<br>(b) Administrative skills<br>(c) Past evaluation reports<br>(d) Current district and/or building goals<br><br>(2) The supervisor (evaluator) reviews:<br>(a) The above four items<br>(b) The principal's current performance in relation to the requirements of the job |

| | |
|---|---|
| STEP 2<br>Formulate Work Plan for the Year<br>(By October 1) | (1) The principal identifies needs for the forthcoming year based on perceptions of past and current performance<br>(2) The supervisor reflects on the principal's needs based upon past and current performance<br>(3) Both confer to decide whether the evaluation thrust, for the coming year, should be:<br>(a) A DEVELOPMENT PLAN (to upgrade existing competencies) or<br>(b) An IMPROVEMENT PLAN (to correct specific deficiencies, agreed to by both parties)<br>(4) Both discuss implementing activities to achieve the goals of the Work Plan |
| STEP 3<br>Finalize and Implement Work Plan<br>(October through May) | (1) Principal:<br>(a) Puts Work Plan in writing. Gets "OK" of supervisor<br>(b) Carries out implementing activities<br>(2) Supervisor:<br>(a) Reviews/reacts to principal's Work Plan<br>(b) Monitors progress in carrying out Work Plan<br>(3) Both parties meet to conduct Progress Reviews (December and March); make modifications in Work Plan (if needed)<br>(4) Principal completes implementation of Work Plan |
| STEP 4<br>Assess Results<br>(By April 30) | (1) Principal:<br>(a) Completes self-assessment portion (Page ER1) of End-Of-Year Evaluation Report Form ER and transmits it to supervisor.<br>(2) Supervisor:<br>(a) Receives assessment from principal<br>(b) Completes assessment of principal's performance using page ER2 of End-Of-Year Evaluation Report Form<br>(c) Notifies principal of date/place of conference |
| STEP 5<br>Discuss Results<br>(By June 30) | Supervisor and Principal meet to review and discuss:<br>(a) Principal's self-assessment<br>(b) Supervisor's assessment<br>(c) Signing and distribution of End-Of-Year Evaluation Report Forms<br>(d) Plan for next evaluation cycle |

## EVALUATION FORMS

LEAP requires two forms: the Work Plan and the Evaluation Report. Completed sample versions are given here.

### WORK PLAN

SCHOOL YEAR: 1981-82

Check One
- [x] DEVELOPMENT PLAN
- [ ] IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PRINCIPAL: Howard Aston — POSITION: Principal of Alpha High School

SUPERVISOR: Mary Brighton — POSITION: Director of Secondary Education

Directions: The principal, after consultation with the supervisor, completes the Work Plan form. The goals should be responsive to the needs agreed to by principal and supervisor.

| SPECIFIC ASPECT OF JOB CONTENT | SPECIFIC GOAL (Objective) | IMPLEMENTING ACTIVITIES | OUTCOMES EXPECTED |
|---|---|---|---|
| PD: #3 Supervision | Motivate individual teachers to develop and achieve at least one major self improvement activity during 1981-82 | a) Orient staff<br>b) Provide assistance<br>c) Monitor progress<br>d) Review results | 100% participation and successful achievement of goals |
| AS: #3.3 Paperwork | Reduce by 10% the time required daily to clear the in-basket | a) Instruct secretary to assign priorities to all in-inbasket items | Reduction by 10% in the time required to process all incoming mail and related reading matter |
| DG: Cut use of electricity in building | Reduce use of electricity in building so that annual cost savings will be at least 5% over last year | a) Enlist staff support<br>b) Get student support | Achieve no less than a 5% cost savings in 1981-82 over 1980-81 |
| BG: Same as district goal | Same | Same | Same |

Code
PD = Position Description
AS = Administrative Skills
DG = District Goals
BG = Building Goals

COPIES:
Original - Supervisor
Copy - Principal

Goals reviewed and approved by:

[signature] — 9/17/81 (Date)

(If not approved, give reasons on separate memorandum.)

END-OF-YEAR EVALUATION REPORT FORM ER-1

SCHOOL YEAR: 1981-82

PRINCIPAL: Howard Aston POSITION: Principal, Alpha H.S.

EVALUATOR: Mary Brighton POSITION: Director of Secondary Educ.

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*Directions*: The principal completes page 1 of this form. In Part I below, list the objectives from the Work Plan agreed on for the year. Circle the symbol in the assessment column that best describes the extent to which the objectives have been achieved. Symbols: FA = Fully Achieved; PA = Partially Achieved; NA = Not Achieved.

In Part II, explain any assessment marked PA or NA.

Send a copy of your completed ER-1 to the evaluator and request a conference date to discuss the implications of the self-assessment. The evaluator will complete page 2 of Form ER. After the conference, a file copy of the form will be prepared.

---

| Part I: Attainment of Objectives | Circle Assessments |
|---|---|
| 1. Motivating teachers to engage in self-improvement activities..... | (FA) PA NA |
| 2. Increase efficiency in handling paperwork..... | FA (PA) NA |
| 3. Reduce use of electricity in building..... | (FA) PA NA |
| | FA PA NA |
| | FA PA NA |

---

Part II: Comments (Use this space to explain any assessment marked PA or NA)

Goal 2: Increase efficiency in handling paperwork.

Did not reduce the time required to process paperwork sufficiently to meet my 10% goal. I probably set the goal too high for a beginning effort. Will continue to work on this problem.

Howard Aston (Principal)

May 4, 1982 (Date)

END-OF-YEAR EVALULATION REPORT ER-2

SCHOOL YEAR: 1981-82

PRINCIPAL: Howard Aston POSITION: Principal, Alpha H.S.

EVALUATOR: Mary Brighton POSITION: Director of Secondary Educ.

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*Directions:* The evaluator completes page 2 of this form. In Part I, circle the symbol in the assessment center that best indicates your estimate of the principal's total performance in each of the Administrative Skills. (Symbols: M = Meets Expectations; N = Needs Improvement; U = Unsatisfactory)

In Part II, write a narrative evaluation of the evaluatee's performance with reference to the Position Description.

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| Part I: Administrative Skills | Circle Assessments | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.0 Problem Analysis | (M) | N | U |
| 2.0 Judgment | (M) | N | U |
| 3.0 Organizational Ability | M | (N) | U |
| 4.0 Decisiveness | (M) | N | U |
| 5.0 Leadership | (M) | N | U |
| 6.0 Sensitivity | (M) | N | U |
| 7.0 Range of Interests | (M) | N | U |
| 8.0 Personal Motivation | (M) | N | U |
| 9.0 Educational Values | M | (N) | U |
| 10.0 Stress Tolerance | (M) | N | U |
| 11.0 Oral Communication Skills | (M) | N | U |
| 12.0 Written Communication Skills | M | (N) | U |

---

Comments: (Use this space to explain any rating of N or U)

Area 3.0 - See 3.3; continues to be a problem; let's work on it next year.

Area 9.0 - See 9.3; receptivity toward change needs attention.

Area 12.0 - I suggest that we get some technical help for you in this area.

These assessments are based upon the following number of contacts: Circle 1 2 3 (4) 5+

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END-OF-YEAR EVALUATION REPORT (Cont.)

Part II: POSITION DESCRIPTION [Write narrative statements indicating areas of strength (at least two) and areas where improvement is needed.]

Strengths:

Responsibility #1 -- You have provided strong guidance and support to teachers working to improve the college preparatory program.

Responsibility #15 -- Excellent, you initiated a new academic club program this year at Alpha High School.

SIGNATURES:

Supervisor: Mary Brighton Date: May 10, 1982

Principal: Howard Eaton Date: May 10, 1982

This *Practitioner* departs from the usual format to present a total model for the evaluation of principals. It was developed by George B. Redfern, educational management consultant, and Paul W. Hersey, NASSP director of professional assistance. A February 1980 *Practitioner* on "Evaluation of Teachers -- Performance Improvement Commitments" can also be obtained from NASSP.

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